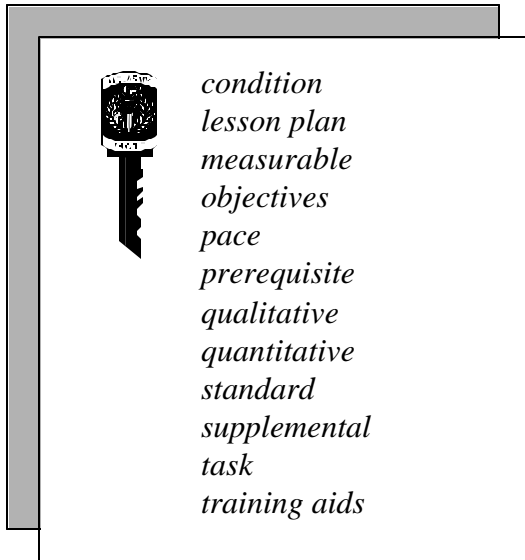


## TEACHING SKILLS

### LESSON 1: PREPARING TO TEACH



#### INTRODUCTION

Being an instructor, or an assistant instructor, will be a challenging experience for you. It is for anyone — even experienced teachers. Instructing may also be a little frightening.

In this lesson, you will be introduced to five critical elements that you need to consider while preparing to teach. The five critical elements are listed below:

- Motivation
- Know your material
- Lesson objectives
- Training aids
- Lesson plan

#### MOTIVATION

In order to properly teach a class, you must be motivated. Motivation is a drive that comes from within yourself. When you get excited about doing something, you will discover that you have the necessary motivation to do that task well. However, the opposite is also true. If you do not get excited about the task, you will lack the necessary motivation and drive to perform the task successfully. In teaching, just doing an okay or a satisfactory job is not enough. The students in your class deserve the best instruction and instructors to guarantee a solid education. Therefore, when your instructors give you the opportunity to become a student instructor, consider it a challenging and exciting opportunity.

#### KNOW YOUR MATERIAL

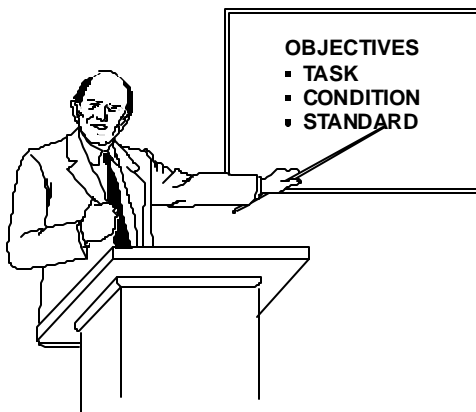
It is essential to know your material well so that you can effectively teach it. To do that, you must research and rehearse your subject just like you would a speech. Knowing your material well will make you more confident and self-assured in front of your class.

To gain that necessary level of confidence in yourself, you must organize your thoughts, prepare and/or review your lesson plan, make any changes as required to it, and rehearse your material. When rehearsing, practice in front of a mirror, friends, parents, video camera, or with a tape recorder. Always rehearse the material in the manner you plan to present it to the class. Doing one or a combination of these methods will enable you to **pace** your material to ensure that you have the right amount of information and that you sufficiently cover the areas that need special emphasis.

Classes have a set length and your job is to effectively cover the instruction within that period of time. If you know and rehearse your material, you will be comfortable teaching it to others. Additionally, try to relax while teaching — that will put both you and your class at ease and make them feel more comfortable with you.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a student instructor, one of your primary responsibilities is to understand the importance of learning **objectives** as they relate to the material your instructor has assigned you to teach. Learning objectives indicate what skills, knowledge, or attitudes your students should be able to accomplish once you finish the instruction. That is, learning objectives tell the students in clear, performance terms what supporting skills, knowledge, and attitudes they will need to learn as they work toward achievement of the task.



By breaking major subjects into smaller pieces, learning objectives give students smaller goals to shoot for that are less overwhelming. They provide benchmarks by which students and instructors can measure progress toward achieving the desired outcome. From an instructor's standpoint, learning objectives lay the groundwork for the development and selection of the type of

evaluation criteria the instructor should use to measure students' progress.

All learning objectives must be realistic, attainable, observable, and measurable. That is, at the end of each period of instruction, you should be able to administer a test based on the criteria of the objective and on the material you presented. Likewise, students should be able to pass a test, or at least demonstrate to the best of their ability, that they have a basic understanding of the material you presented.

**Note:** The process to develop learning objectives is by far more complex and detailed than presented here; however, this material should give you an appreciation for what learning objectives are and the basic developmental procedures.

## TASK, CONDITION, AND STANDARD

Learning objectives are clear, concise, simple, and straightforward statements that consist of three parts: **task**, **condition**, and **standard**. Do not include any extra or confusing information in a learning objective. By combining these parts, we have a properly written learning objective (as shown below):

*Given a topographic map and a coordinate scale (condition), write a six-digit grid coordinate (task) to within 100 meters (standard).*

## Task

**Definition.** The task states the action that a class, group of students, or an individual must perform.

**Characteristics.** Each task statement should:

- Begin with an action verb that will indicate how you can measure the

intended outcome. The following chart contains examples of **measurable** action verbs.

SAMPLE ACTION VERB LIST		
act	discuss	predict
answer	distinguish	prepare
apply	estimate	produce
arrange	explain	rate
build	give examples of	record
calculate	identify	report
change	illustrate	reply
choose	join	restate
classify	judge	revise
compare	justify	schedule
compete	list	select
compose	match	show
compute	measure	solve
contrast	modify	state
create	name	summarize
define	organize	use
demonstrate	outline	verify
describe	perform	write/rewrite

- Describe completely the performance students are to accomplish.
- Be clearly relevant to the task.
- Be accurate and precise.
- Avoid overlapping with other actions. A properly written task statement contains only one action that you want students to accomplish. More than one action may cause confusion, lead to poor or incomplete performance, and be difficult to measure.

### **Condition**

**Definition.** The condition (or set of Conditions) describes clearly and completely the circumstances under which the task must be performed.

**Characteristics.** The condition statement should:

- Specify exactly what you will give students to assist them in accomplishing the task, such as guidance, supervision, or other forms of help.
- List any references or memory aids that students will need while performing the task.
- Specify any restrictions or limitations.
- Identify the tools, equipment, clothing, or other resources needed to accomplish the task.
- Describe the type of environment in which students must perform the task.
- Describe any special, physical, environmental, or safety conditions that students may encounter while performing the task.

### **Standard**

**Definition.** The standard states how well the task must be performed.

**Characteristics.** The standard measures how well you expect students to perform the task by specifying the minimum acceptable level of achievement. Since instructors must be able to measure all tasks to some degree, we classify standards in two categories: **quantitative** and **qualitative**.

Quantitative standards use numbers to measure performance. By using quantitative measurements, you can evaluate how well students performed the task. Indicated below are five aspects of performance for which we can use quantitative standards.

1. **Accuracy.** If an evaluator measures performance with a measuring tool, the standard must state how close to perfection a person must perform the task; for

example, “*stretching across the baseline 4.5 inches.*”

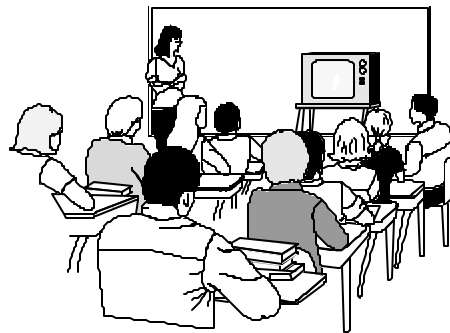
2. **Quantity.** If an evaluator measures performance in units of measure (such as the number of items, yards, pounds, dollars, miles, or rounds), the standard must indicate a quantity to the closest unit; for example, “*to within 100 meters.*”
3. **Time.** If time is an important factor in performing the task, the standard must state a specified time requirement; for example, “*within 9 seconds after hearing the alarm.*”
4. **Rate.** Rate is a quantity over a set period of time. For tasks where rates are important, the standard must specify the rate; for example, “*20 units per day.*”
5. **Completeness.** Under conditions or situations where the performance does not require a specific measurement, the standard must show a general degree of completeness. Examples of this standard include: “*...with all steps performed*” “*All pieces must be assembled in the correct relationship*” “*All key personnel must be notified*”

Qualitative standards do not use numbers to measure performance unless there is some type of rating system. Otherwise, they require the evaluator to make a judgment. An example of a qualitative standard is “*adjust the carburetor until the engine runs at its smoothest point.*” If you must use a qualitative standard, avoid vague words such as “effective,” “acceptable,” “proper,” “correct,” and “average.”

Remember, develop standard statements that are realistic, attainable, observable, and measurable. Learning objectives guide the instructor and the class through each lesson. Properly written learning objectives emphasize what the instructor should teach and what the class members should learn.

## TRAINING AIDS

**Training aids** are materials that help you teach. In fact, any item that enhances the quality of your instruction and helps you to display instructional material is a training aid. Types of training aids include computers, overhead projectors, television sets with videocassette recorders, chalkboards, hand-outs, bulletin boards, posters, etc.



In order to make a training aid effective, you must use it properly. That is, use it the way you would use a visual aid when giving a speech. Use a training aid as a part of your lesson; however, your entire lesson cannot rely on the use of training aids.

When you find a training aid that you like, rehearse your lesson with it. The following pointers will enable you to use training aids more effectively.

- A training aid should adequately support the material in your lesson.
- Do not talk to your training aids. Keep eye contact with your class as much as possible.
- Make your training aids large enough for everyone to see, and if your training aids use sound, loud enough for everyone to hear.

## LESSON PLANS

Developing an effective **lesson plan** is an important part of teaching. Without a well-written lesson plan, it would be almost impossible for you to teach in an organized manner. If you are organized, it will be easier for you to teach the lesson objectives, especially for those difficult tasks.



### EIGHT TIPS FOR LESSON PLANNING

When teaching a class, structure your presentation by following the eight tips outlined below. What is important is that you have a logical and orderly method of teaching your lesson. These eight tips will help you to capture the attention of your class, keep their attention throughout your presentation, build their respect in your ability as a teacher, and increase your self-confidence.

1. *Practice the material you plan to present to the class. Pay close attention to your pace.* Know how long each section of your lesson will take. Do not waste time. You may need that time to adequately discuss the main points or for questions and answers.
2. *Use an opening that will grab the attention of the class.*
3. *Inform the students of the lesson's learning objectives and of your expectations.* This tells them specifically what you will be teaching and how well you will expect them to know the material.

4. *Briefly review any material from previous lessons (prerequisites) that relates to the material you are teaching.*
5. *Inform or advise the students of any precautions, safety requirements, or special instructions regarding the lesson.*
6. *Present the material according to your lesson plan. Use your training aids effectively.* Describe any assignments or practical exercises you plan to give and ensure the class knows how to accomplish them.
7. *Use demonstrations and/or other forms of practical exercises, when appropriate, to reinforce your instruction.* Give your class examples that will help them understand and complete their assignments or practical exercises.
8. *Repeat any material discussed that your class did not fully understand, time permitting. Allow time for questions and answers.* That is your measurement of how well the class understood the material you discussed. However, plan to spend additional time with certain students before or after class to ensure they understand the lesson. You may wish to make a list of **supplemental** material students can review to help them better understand the lesson. Then, *conclude or review the main points of your material and the lesson learning objectives.*

## CONCLUSION

When conducting a class, or assisting someone else teach, proper preparation is essential to doing your best.

Learn the content, create observable and measurable objectives, identify the training aids you will use, develop a lesson plan, and motivate yourself.